

The Cup.

Ben Osamuyi Igbinosa

We come to God for different reasons. Some serve God because they want to make money; some for fame; some for protection, while others serve God because he is God. However, there are always two sides to a coin. There is always the other side. We may neglect that other side. But it is ever present.

The Christian journey is characterized by sweet-bitter experiences. Sweet when it is all good. Bitter when sacrifices must be made for the glory of the Lord to be manifest in his people. The bitter experiences are so called because they deal with the excesses of the flesh. None of us escapes these. Sometimes we overcome them. Sometimes we do not. They are temptations that shape us for the greater glory of the Lord. God allows them to help us grow. 1 Cor. 10:10-13

Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. [11] Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. [12] Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. [13] There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

The experience of Israel, which I Cor 10 refers to are for us to learn. God knows everything. He allowed them to pass through those experiences to test their obedience. There is no situation that he could not have reversed otherwise. Indeed, we see how he responded; when the complaints of the people became too much for Moses to bear. Either he caused water to flow, or give them quails or outrightly chastised them for their evil doing. For they were not seeing the hand of the Lord upon them as they should. It is in the nature of man to be full of contradictions. They people who sang praises in Exodus 14, were the people who declared moments later, “these be gods that brought us out of Egypt” in Exodus 15.

For us today, such occasional failures are not to draw us back. Neither are we to glory in the victories of the flesh in our lives. Paul says that he counts them but dung, for the excellency of the one who called him, Jesus Christ.

Philip. 3:4

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

Revelation 6 tells us that the book was sweet in the mouth but bitter in the belly. But if we can eat it, it brings forth life. If you lose your life, you gain it, but lose it, if you find it. Apostle Paul counsels:

Philip. 3:7-11

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. [8] Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, [9] And

be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: [10] That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; [11] If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

The flesh gains ascendancy when we refuse to mortify the deeds of the flesh. Whatsoever gain we would have sets us back from the glory that God has proposed for us, when we overcome. The bible tells us that angels attended to Jesus, when he overcame the temptations of the devil in the wilderness at the beginning of the his earthly ministry.

Philip. 3:12-16

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. [13] Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, [14] I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. [15] Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. [16] Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

However, when we fail, we are not to allow such to slow us down. We move on.

Psalm 23:5

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

The enemy called flesh has no strength to prevail against us if we have faith even as small as a mustered seed. There is a feast the Lord has prepared for us in the very presence of the enemy. It is the same time he judges the enemy in us that he elevates the Christ in us. He anoints our heads with the oil of understanding, and therefore the cup of blessings runs over.

In Matt 20:20, Salome, Zebedde's wife, led her two sons, James and John to Jesus Christ to ask a favour. That each of the sons will stay on the right and left side of him, when he comes to Glory. One thing fundamental to this request is that mother and children believed in the Lord and sought to be part of the glory that was to come after the trials and resurrection. The Lord asked if they can drink of the cup that he drinks. Even if they could as they claimed they could, what they asked was not of him to give.

It is instructive that these two brothers were very close to Jesus. They, with Peter formed the inner circle or cabinet of the Lord. He took them to the mount of Transfiguration and in the garden of Gethsemane. Bible history tells us that Salome was related to Mary, the mother of Jesus. However, like the Lord said, what they asked was not given but by God's election.

I believe that after this, they both did not give up the desire to be the second and the third to Jesus. I cannot say if their desires were fulfilled. But a peep into their history will give us insight into how far they tried! James and John had temper. They were referred to as son of Thunder on

account of this. After the ascension, Herod wanted to please the Jews. He vexed the church. He murdered James. James thus became the first martyr in the church. The church intervened to stop a spate of killings by praying to deliver Peter from prison. Did James drink of the same cup as the Lord?

The brother John, was crucified at the Island of Patmos, head down. The book of Revelation tells us how far he fellowshiped with the Lord. We could say that these two brothers “had fellowship of his suffering”. They were conformable unto his death. In an examination of the gates of the holy city (Rev 21), these two represented Baptisms (James) and Faith (John). The stones are Chalcedony (James) and Sapphire (John). In the arrangement, Jasper (Peter) representing repentance was first, followed by Sapphire and then Chalcedony.

To drink of the neglected cup, we must have faith as John. The Lord told us that if we have faith as small as a mustard seed, we can overcome all our “problems”. Thus when we ask, we must believe. To be able to pass through the mill of temptations and emerge victorious, we must have faith to stand firm upon the promises of the Lord.

Matt 11:28-30 invites us to baptism into Him. The necessity is to die to the self. When the self is destroyed, God will have his way. Rom 6:14 tells us about death to the self. The second baptism (of water) is burial with him. The baptism of the holy spirit gives a new life. It sweeps away the old life. You only need to seek the face of the Lord to roll away the past. The baptism of fire translates you to the spirit. This is the ascension, achieved through “knocking”.

The lord will put his hand on aspects of our lives that are dear to us. But once the spirit says let go, we must let go. Yes, there is a price we pay for this. It is the price that redeems us from the corruption that is the world.

Genesis 23:1-4

And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. [2] And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

[3] And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, [4] I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

Sarah was dear to Abraham. He loved her as a wife and a sister. She was the mother of the dear son, who he loved so much. There are things that are important to us. By the leading of the spirit, we can identify such as should go, that we might enter into a new phase in Him. We must bury all such out of our sights. Abraham paid 400 shekels of silver for a permanent burial place for Sarah. So we must sacrifice the comfort we get from things legitimate that have become hindrances to our prosperity in the Lord.

Genesis 23:15-20

My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. [16] And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

[17] And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field,

and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure [18] Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. [19] And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. [20] And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth.

Luke 5:37: And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. The old life must give way. The cup that he drinks of is the very personal sacrifice. What the Lord may ask of you may not be what he may ask of me. We differ in this respect. Spiritual consciousness assists us to tell what should go. But when we are hard hearing, he may send a carmel to talk to us. May we obey before it gets that bad, Amen.